

New World Screwworm: Information for Iowa Clinicians

Health Advisory

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- On January 20, 2026, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Health Advisory following recent detections of New World Screwworm (NWS) in Tamaulipas, Mexico, which borders Texas. Historically, NWS was present in the United States (U.S.) but was eliminated during the twentieth century. It has since reestablished in [parts of Mexico](#), all Central American countries, five Caribbean countries (Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago), and some South American countries. **NWS is not present in the Iowa or any U.S. state.** NWS has never established itself in Iowa because the state's cold winters prevent its survival.
- NWS is primarily a livestock pest but can also infest humans (myiasis) and other animals. Larvae are obligate parasites that consume only living tissue, entering through the nose, ears, eyes, mouth, genitals, or open wounds. Infestations cause destruction of healthy tissue and may be associated with foul odor, bloody discharge, swelling, and pain. Some patients report pain, itching, and sensations of movement.
- Iowa clinicians should consider NWS in patients who 1) present with visible larvae or egg masses in nose, ears, eyes, mouth, genitals, or open wounds, 2) have a compatible travel history, **AND** 3) have factors that increase susceptibility, such as working around infected livestock, having open wounds, impaired wound healing, advanced age or incapacitation, and sleeping outdoors. Patients who have not traveled to an affected area within the previous three weeks are not at risk for NWS infestation.
- Person-to-person transmission does not occur; healthcare-associated transmission does not occur. Larvae require soil to complete their lifecycle. Standard precautions are sufficient when treating suspected cases.
- Treatment requires complete removal of all larvae and eggs. Specimens should be placed in a leak-proof container with enough 70% ethanol (preferred) or isopropanol to fully submerge them. **Live larvae should never be discarded in the trash.**
- Submitting larvae for identification is critical because other fly species can cause similar infestations. **Iowa clinicians who suspect NWS myiasis in a person should immediately call the HHS Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) at 1-800-362-2736 (daytime) or 515-323-4360 (after hours, ask for the on-call epidemiologist). The State Public Health Veterinarian will coordinate transport and testing of larvae.**
- Anyone who suspects NWS myiasis in an animal should immediately contact their veterinarian. Iowa veterinarians should then call the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) at 515-281-5305 during business hours or 515-242-0247 after hours. Prompt reporting is essential for suspected infestations among livestock as well as people. While NWS is not a food safety concern, it is a disease of economic importance to Iowa's livestock industries due to the production losses it can cause.
- Additional technical information can be accessed at [New World Screwworm: Outbreak Moves into Northern Mexico | HAN | CDC](#).

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